

March 21, 2003

Dear Presiding Judges and Court Executive Officers:

The 2003 California Judicial Administration Conference (CJAC) was held in San Francisco on February 26 and 27. The theme for this year's program, *Judicial Branch Governance in Critical Times: Challenges and Opportunities*, reflected the concerns that many of us have expressed privately and publicly during the past months as we have struggled with governance issues. Our goal as chairs of the CJAC Oversight and Content Committees was to provide conference participants with an opportunity to discuss the challenges and opportunities for judicial branch governance here in California.

CJAC brought together court leaders from throughout the state to engage in a conversation about judicial branch governance and our roles as leaders, whether locally or statewide. Our collective involvement in these conversations was important as together we face the challenge of effective governance in critical and challenging times.

Recorders in each breakout session documented ideas and concerns generated by participants as they discussed answers to the questions and/or as they discussed branchwide governance in general. The ideas and concerns expressed by conference participants fell into four thematic areas: governance issues, communications, operations, and culture and change. To facilitate further conversation, the ideas and concerns have been organized under these four themes and as challenges and opportunities at both the state and local court level.

In addition to documentation of discussions, several conference participants asked for additional information on advisory committees and the processes they used to analyze and present issues to the Judicial Council. In this package, they have included several documents in response to those requests.

Finally, many conference participants asked about how to best have conversations about branchwide governance at the local level. In response to those requests, we are including some suggestions for how you might use the materials provided in this package.

We hope that you will continue the dialogue about branchwide governance in your local court, keeping in mind that branchwide governance would include some practices that would be statewide and some practices that would be local.

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If you have ideas or suggestions about ways to achieve the branchwide governance goals, or suggestions as to additional challenges and opportunities at the state and local level, please use the enclosed feedback document to provide your court's input to the director in your regional AOC office. Our continued conversation about the evolution of the judicial branch is important during these critical times.



Hon. Richard D. Aldrich  
Associate Justice of the Court of Appeal  
Second Appellate District, Division Three  
Chair, CJAC Oversight Committee



Hon. Richard Strauss  
Presiding Judge of the  
Superior Court of California,  
County of San Diego  
Chair, CJAC Content Committee